



South African Orthopaedic Association

Association Not For Gain | Reg. No. 05/00136/08

SAOA-Specific ABC Fellowship Selection Process Document

Introduction

The American-British-Canadian (ABC) Travelling Fellowship, established in 1948 by Dr. R.I. Harris of Canada, is one of the most prestigious honors in orthopaedic surgery. Designed to foster global collaboration and knowledge exchange, it has since expanded to include the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa.

South Africa joined the program in 1974, with Dr. Theo Pistorius as the first South African representative. Since then, the fellowship has been a platform for South African orthopaedic surgeons to engage with their peers, share expertise, and contribute to the global orthopaedic community. The fellowship not only highlights South Africa's advancements but also allows the selected fellow to serve as an ambassador, showcasing the unique challenges and innovations within the country's healthcare system.

Historical Overview of the Fellowship

- **Origins:** The ABC Fellowship began as a means to bridge the gap in international orthopaedic collaboration post-World War II. The first fellowship in 1948 included British orthopaedic surgeons visiting North America. By 1954, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa began participating, initially on a rotational basis.
- **Evolution:** Over time, the program expanded to allow more regular participation from Southern Hemisphere countries, with South Africa becoming a consistent contributor to this global exchange.

List of South African ABC Fellows

South Africa has proudly contributed many esteemed surgeons to the ABC Fellowship. Below is the complete list of fellows:

Year	Name	Year	Name
1959	M. Lunz	2000	E.L. Burger
1964	C. Malkin	2002	P. Makan
1970	J.E. Handelsman	2004	R.N. Dunn
1974	R. Pillemer	2006	M.T. Mariba
1978	R.B. Snowdowne	2008	A.D. Barrow
1982	I.D. Learmonth	2010	S. Dix-Peek
1984	J.B. Craig	2012	C.H. Snyckers
1986	J.A. Shipley	2014	G.B. Firth
1988	M.M. (Thys) Malan	2016	C. Anley
1990	J.A. (Koos) Louw	2018	M. Held
1992	B.G.P. Lindeque	2022	S. Maungo
1994	M. Lukhele	2024	M. Laubscher
1996	R.K. Fraser		
1998	B.C. Vrettos		



South African Orthopaedic Association

Association Not For Gain | Reg. No. 05/00136/08

Eligibility Criteria

To uphold the high standards of the ABC Fellowship, applicants must:

1. Be a fully paid and active member of the South African Orthopaedic Association (SAOA).
2. Have no more than 13 years of experience as a qualified orthopaedic surgeon at the time of travel.
3. Submit a detailed CV showcasing achievements in:
 - **Teaching and Learning**
 - **Research**
 - **Leadership**
 - **Administration and Management**
 - **Social Responsiveness**, including clinical work and outreach.
4. Provide evidence of at least four academic presentations, including one non-scientific presentation.
5. Demonstrate an ability to represent South Africa internationally, highlighting the country's strengths and addressing its challenges diplomatically.
6. **Diversity and Representation:** The SAOA encourages applications from individuals of diverse backgrounds, including underrepresented groups, to reflect the full spectrum of talent and experiences within South African orthopaedics.

Application Process

1. **Submission Deadline:** Applications must reach the SAOA office by June 30 of the year preceding the fellowship.
2. **Required Documents:**
 - CV highlighting achievements in the specified categories.
 - Personal statement outlining motivations and anticipated benefits of the fellowship.
 - Two letters of recommendation from SAOA members.

Selection Process

1. Shortlisting:

Applications will be reviewed and scored using the following detailed evaluation rubric to ensure transparency and objectivity (**Addendum A**):

Category	Points (out of 100)	Criteria
Research Output	30 points	- Peer-reviewed publications (0–15 points) - Conference presentations (0–10 points) - Impact on clinical practice or innovation (0–5 points)
Teaching and Mentorship	20 points	- Mentoring junior surgeons (0–10 points) - Teaching roles or contributions to educational programs (0–10 points)
Leadership and Administration	20 points	- Positions held within professional organizations (0–10 points) - Leadership roles in outreach or community service (0–10 points)
Cultural / Diplomatic Representation	15 points	- Ability to represent South Africa positively in international forums (0–15 points)
Overall Presentation and Fit	15 points	- Clarity and quality of the personal statement (0–10 points) - Letters of recommendation (0–5 points)

2. Interview Process:



South African Orthopaedic Association

Association Not For Gain | Reg. No. 05/00136/08

A structured interview process is conducted using the rubric provided in **Addendum B**, assessing:

- Academic and clinical contributions.
- Leadership potential.
- Strategies for representing South Africa internationally.
- Knowledge of the healthcare challenges facing the country.

Timeline for ABC Fellowship Selection Process

Step	Date	Details
Application Opens	April 1	Call for applications sent to SAOA members.
Submission Deadline	June 30	Complete applications must be submitted to the SAOA office.
Initial Screening	July 1–31	Applications reviewed and scored by the selection committee.
Shortlisting Announcement	August 15	Shortlisted candidates notified.
Interviews	During SAOA Annual Congress	Conducted by the selection panel.
Final Announcement	October 1	Successful candidate announced and informed.

Financial Support (*Suggestion*)

The SAOA provides financial support to cover essential expenses associated with the ABC Fellowship, including:

- International travel to host countries.
- Accommodation during the fellowship tour.

Fellowship Alumni Network (*Suggestion*)

The SAOA proposes establishing a formal alumni network for past ABC fellows to enhance the fellowship's legacy and impact. The network would aim to:

1. **Mentor Future Fellows:** Provide guidance to shortlisted candidates during the application and selection process, including interview preparation and insights for the fellowship tour.
2. **Promote the Fellowship:** Actively participate in SAOA events such as annual congresses, webinars, or outreach initiatives to raise awareness of the fellowship and its benefits.
3. **Contribute to Knowledge Sharing:** Host post-fellowship presentations or write articles for the SAOA newsletter or orthopaedic journals, sharing experiences and learnings from the tour to inspire the orthopaedic community.

Fellowship Responsibilities

The selected fellow will:

1. Visit 15–20 orthopaedic centers in North America, attending the AOA and COA annual meetings.
2. Present academic work and participate in discussions highlighting South African orthopaedics.
3. Serve as an ambassador, promoting SAOA's values and addressing healthcare challenges in South Africa.
4. **Engage Publicly (*Suggestion*):** Deliver guest lectures, participate in academic forums, and contribute to discussions at host institutions to foster deeper collaboration and share insights from South Africa.

Post-Fellowship Responsibilities

Upon returning, the fellow will:

1. Present a summary of their experience at the SAOA Annual Congress.



South African Orthopaedic Association

Association Not For Gain | Reg. No. 05/00136/08

2. Publish reflections or key learnings in the SAOA newsletter or a peer-reviewed journal.
3. Participate in mentoring future candidates, contributing to the growth of the ABC Fellowship legacy in South Africa.

Closing Statement

The ABC Fellowship not only elevates individual surgeons but also strengthens the global reputation of South African orthopaedics. With a legacy of excellence spanning decades, the fellowship remains a cornerstone for fostering international collaboration, innovation, and leadership.

“Leading South Africa’s Orthopaedic Excellence to Global Heights”



South African Orthopaedic Association

Association Not For Gain | Reg. No. 05/00136/08

Addendum A: Shortlisting Scoring Rubric

Scoring Criteria

Each application will be reviewed and scored out of 100 points based on the following detailed rubric:

Scoring Benchmarks

- Research Output: High scores (10–15 points) are awarded for candidates with multiple peer-reviewed publications in impactful journals and significant conference presentations.
- Teaching and Mentorship: Maximum points are for active involvement in mentoring junior colleagues and consistent contributions to teaching programs.
- Leadership and Administration: Scores reflect leadership roles in professional societies, clinical programs, or impactful community projects.
- Cultural and Diplomatic Representation: Evaluates candidates' ability to articulate South Africa's healthcare challenges and strengths effectively.
- Overall Presentation and Fit: Considers the quality of the application package and the strength of endorsements.



South African Orthopaedic Association

Association Not For Gain | Reg. No. 05/00136/08

Addendum B: Interview Questions

Interview Format

Each candidate will be asked five standardized questions. Answers will be scored out of 10 for each question, for a total score of 50.

Scoring Criteria

- **10 Points:** Outstanding answer; well-articulated, innovative, and impactful.
- **7–9 Points:** Strong answer with clear relevance and depth.
- **4–6 Points:** Average response, lacking depth or clarity.
- **0–3 Points:** Poorly articulated or irrelevant response.